SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS PROJECT
COURT SITE STUDY 2002-2003
SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Purpose of questionnaire

Have you ever represented yourself in court? More and more people are coming to court in Nova Scotia without lawyers. We are conducting research to find out

- WHO are these people without lawyers,
- WHY people come to court without lawyers,
- WHAT are the needs of people who come to court without lawyers,
- HOW the courts might best help address these needs in the future.

We call people without lawyers self-represented litigants.

This questionnaire is an important part of the research our Self- Represented Litigant Project is conducting for the Department of Justice. The answers you provide will be kept strictly confidential - no names will be used in our research report and the questionnaires will be destroyed after the research project is completed/our report is written.

WHO are self-represented litigants?

1. What is your age range?

- ❑ less than 20
- ❑ 20 - 24
- ❑ 25 - 34
- ❑ 35 - 44
- ❑ 45 - 54
- ❑ 55 - 64
- ❑ 65 and over

2. Educational level:

- ❑ some high school or less
- ❑ high school graduate
- ❑ some post-secondary (community college/univ)
- ❑ community college graduate
- ❑ university bachelors degree
- ❑ university graduate degree

3. Income level:

- ❑ less than $15,000
- ❑ $15,000 - $29,999
- ❑ $30,000 - $59,999
- ❑ $60,000 +

4. Paid worker?

- ❑ yes
- ❑ no

5. Indicate which of the following items you have:

- ❑ telephone
- ❑ personal or home computer
- ❑ access to the internet
- ❑ personal email address
- ❑ public library card

6. Are you:

- ❑ male
- ❑ female

WHY no lawyer?

7. Why don't you have a lawyer representing you in your court case?

- ❑ don't need/want one
- ❑ can't afford one
- ❑ Legal Aid denied/not available

8. If you answered that you don't need/want one, please tell us why you don't need/want a lawyer.

- ❑ previous bad experience with a lawyer
- ❑ matter is simple/straightforward
- ❑ can do as good a job for myself
- ❑ other reason (please tell us)

9. Would you feel more confident if you had a lawyer?

- ❑ yes
- ❑ no

10. Did you get advice from a lawyer at any stage of your court case?

- ❑ yes
- ❑ no

11. Have you been self-represented at all stages in your court case?

- ❑ yes - if yes what stage? _____
- ❑ no

WHAT are your needs?

12. What kind of case are you involved in?

- ❑ criminal
- ❑ family
- ❑ landlord/tenant
- ❑ debt recovery
- ❑ employment
- ❑ personal injury
- ❑ other (please tell us) _____

13. What court will your case be heard in?

- ❑ Court of Appeal
- ❑ Supreme Court
- ❑ Family Division (of Supreme Court)
- ❑ Family Court
- ❑ Provincial Court
- ❑ Small Claims Court
- ❑ Probate Court
- ❑ other (please tell us) _____

14. At what stage are you in your court case?

_____

15. Where did you get information about the law and court process for your case?

- ❑ Legal Information Society Nova Scotia
- ❑ lawyer
- ❑ friends
- ❑ relatives
- ❑ staff at the courthouse
- ❑ public library
- ❑ internet
- ❑ transition house/women's shelter
- ❑ support groups
- ❑ mediators
- ❑ health professionals
- ❑ community centres
- ❑ videos
- ❑ pamphlets/brochures

16. What kind of information did you get?

HOW might the courts help you?

17. What (if any) additional information would you have found useful to help you to represent yourself?

18. Did you get help from staff at the court?

- ❑ yes
- ❑ no

19. What kind of help did you get from staff at the court?

20. Was the help you got from staff at the court useful?

- ❑ yes
- ❑ no

21. What more help would you like to have received?

- ❑ courthouse/room tours
- ❑ translation or interpretation services (please specify for which language)
- ❑ information on how to behave in court
- ❑ information on the roles of the people in court
- ❑ information on how to present my case in court
- ❑ information on how to find lawyers
- ❑ the fees and costs of going to court
- ❑ the options for resolving disputes out of court
- ❑ information on how to fill out court forms
- ❑ definitions of legal words
- ❑ information on court process for my case
- ❑ information on enforcing court orders
- ❑ information on complaining about judges or the court
- ❑ information on appealing court decisions
- ❑ other (please tell us)

22. Any other comments?

SUBMIT

THANK YOU